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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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June 26, 1953

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

My dear Mr. Secretary:

In a memorandum of June 25, 1952, forwarded to this Department with the concurrence of the Acting Secretary of Defense June 28, 1952, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, "The importance of the Middle East area is such that planning arrangements should proceed regardless of whether the Arab states elect to participate at this time in the Middle East Defense Organization". Since that date, the United States Government in developing plans for the Middle East has operated on the tacit assumption that Arab cooperation would be won and a MEDO established in the near future.

The Department of State is now convinced that it would be unrealistic to continue to operate on this assumption, and that our plans should be adjusted to take account of the improbability of effecting the creation of a Middle East defense arrangement including the Arab states until there has been a significant improvement in the political atmosphere of the region.

The question thus arises - assuming the Department of Defense continues to hold the views quoted above - as to what form of Middle East planning arrangement we should seek to establish under existing circumstances, taking account of considerations both of military efficiency and of political expediency.

In the view of this Department, it would not now be desirable openly to establish an exclusively Western planning arrangement for Middle East defense in the face of Arab opposition. Such action would have adverse political effects and would

The Honorable
Charles E. Wilson,
Secretary of Defense.

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and would probably further postpone Arab cooperation with the West. It should be possible to accomplish essential military planning through informal, and unpublicized, arrangements which would not risk these undesirable effects. Although it seems unlikely that they would be adequate for the purposes stated in the memorandum of the Joint Chiefs of Staff cited above, the present arrangements for continuing consultation between Headquarters, Allied Forces, Southern Europe, and the United Kingdom-Middle East Land Forces provide an example of the type of unpublicized Middle East defense planning which this Department considers appropriate under present circumstances.

The Department of State would appreciate being informed as to whether the Department of Defense continues to be convinced that defense planning arrangements for the Middle East should proceed even though Arab cooperation cannot now be expected, and, if so, the views of the Department of Defense concerning the nature of such arrangements and the countries which should participate.

Sincerely yours,

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